

And so I welcome you here. I'm proud of what you've done, and I thank you for the tough decisions, so that the people of a free Iraq can realize hopes and dreams. Welcome.

President Talabani. Well, I am proud to have the honor of meeting President George Bush, whom we consider the liberator of Iraq from the worst kind of dictatorship, as a great friend of Iraqi people. I am grateful for what he said about me. But I agree with him that we are going to work together for having this agreement—security agreement between United States and Iraq and also to continue our cooperation in our struggle against terrorism, for promotion of democracy in Iraq and Middle East.

We are proud to have such a good friends here in this great country. And I think we can—I can say that we can pass, this year, two important laws, oil and election. And we are now going to reunite our Government by bringing Tawafuq also to the—I mean, Sunni representatives—to the Iraqi national unity Government headed by our Prime Minister, Nuri Maliki.

I also briefed our good friend about the achievements which Iraq had done in struggle against terrorism and, again, militias, who were making troubles for Iraq and threatening civil war. Now I can say that Iraq—big part of Iraq is stable and is secured and liberated from the danger of terrorism and militia.

Yes, some places still—there are some groups that remain here and there, but I

think big achievement we have done this year with the support of the United States Army and Government and with the friendly advices from President Bush. I can say that we are proud to achieved good successes in Iraq. And our economy is growing.

We have also—big steps forward for national reconciliation. We improved our relation with our neighbors, with Turkey, with Egypt, with Jordan, with Kuwait. We normalized our relation with Iran and with Syria also. So Iraqi Government is now going to play its role in the Arab world as one—a founder of the Arab League. And there is no—I think, no more—any kind of isolation of our Government.

We are doing our best for this agreement. That this agreement with the United States of America—I think we have—we had very good, important steps towards reaching to finalize this agreement. And we continue our struggle to—our efforts to reach—*inshallah*—very soon this agreement.

And again to thank—here I am again here to thank here our great friends, President Bush and American great people, for their sacrifice and their support for Iraqi people. Thank you very much.

President Bush. Thank you, Mr. President. Thank you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 10:43 a.m. in the Oval Office at the White House.

Remarks in a Meeting With United Nations Security Council Permanent Representatives

June 25, 2008

The President. Mr. Ambassador—
Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad. Sir.

The President. —it's good to see you again.

Ambassador Khalilzad. It's good to see you.

The President. Thank you very much for bringing your colleagues from the United

Nations Security Council. And first, I want to thank you all very much for serving your respective countries. And thank you for being voices for peace and freedom.

We've had a really good discussion. We talked about a U.N. Security Council role for Darfur and Burma. We talked a little bit about Iran and how the United Nations Security Council is sending a focused message that the world really offers Iran a better way forward than isolation if they will verifiably suspend their enrichment programs.

And then we talked about Zimbabwe. Friday's elections, you know, appear to be a sham. You can't have free elections if a candidate is not allowed to campaign freely and his supporters aren't allowed to campaign without fear of intimidation. Yet the Mugabe Government has been intimidating the people on the ground in Zimbabwe, and this is an incredibly sad development.

I hope that the EU—I call—AU will, at their meeting this weekend, continue to highlight the illegitimacy of the elections, continue to remind the world that this election is not free and is not fair.

I want to thank very much the leaders in the region, those who have stepped up and spoke clearly. I appreciate them doing their—taking their responsibility seriously. And I want to thank the members here around the table of the United Nations Security Council for your strong Presidential statement. It was a powerful statement for fairness and decency and human dignity. And I suspect you'll still be dealing with this issue. And as you do, I hope you continue to speak with the same clarity that you spoke with last Monday.

People of Zimbabwe deserve better than what they're receiving now. People there want to express themselves at the ballot box, yet the Mugabe Government has refused to allow them to do so. This is not just, and it is wrong.

Thank you very much.

NOTE: The President spoke at 2:31 p.m. in the Roosevelt Room at the White House. In his remarks, he referred to Ambassador Zalmay Khalilzad, U.S. Permanent Representative to the United Nations; and President Robert Mugabe of Zimbabwe.

Remarks at the Max M. Fisher National Republican Leadership Award Dinner in Livonia, Michigan

June 25, 2008

The President. Thank you. Please be seated. Thanks for the—

Audience member. We love you! [*Laughter*]

The President. Thank you for the warm welcome. I'm fresh in from Washington, bringing greetings from First Lady Laura Bush, who's done a fabulous job. And I'm so pleased to be back in Michigan. I've spent some quality time in your State. I've enjoyed it every time I've come. I remember—you know, we've got a lot of fond memories here, such as the time when the

Republican Party nominated a really good guy to be the Vice Presidential candidate with Ronald Reagan. That would be the first President George Bush.

You might remember, that was in Detroit. And I remember the night—the time that Ronald Reagan reminisced about that evening. As he told the story, a friend of his was watching the convention proceedings in a hotel lounge in California. And he was on the stage and my dad was on the stage and all the supporters were on the stage. And then he heard someone